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DE RUEHKH #2469 2830444
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 100444Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4890
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 002469

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [US](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: ONGOING MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NORTH DARFUR

11. (SBU) In briefings to the humanitarian community in El Fasher and in separate conversations with Active Response Corps (ARC) Officer, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) provided updates regarding ongoing military confrontations between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the National Redemption Front (NRF) in North Darfur.

12. (SBU) Most recently, on October 7, a significant clash occurred between SAF and NRF north of Furawiya, in the vicinity of the Boba internally displaced persons (IDP) concentration. (Note: AMIS reported on October 8 that the attack took place "at Kariari, 45 kilometers north of Bamina. The report added that GOS troops have been dislodged from the village to Kornoi. The attack was said to have occurred around 1500 hrs." End Note.) UNDSS reported that the rebels attacked SAF positions, taking 350 soldiers prisoner and capturing 82 vehicles. The NRF reportedly contacted UN officials to inform them of the clash and to request that they take charge of the prisoners. (Comment: It appears that the SAF battalion attacked had only recently moved into the area in support of GNU efforts to seal the border from weapons and logistical support flowing from Chad to Sudanese rebels. Unconfirmed reports also suggest the presence of Chadian forces among the NRF elements that initiated the attack. End Comment.)

13. (SBU) On October 3, both UNDSS and AMIS reported SAF aerial bombardment of Malagat, which reportedly resulted in heavy NRF casualties. Reports from field commanders and civilians in the area further indicated SAF looting of animals and property. The October 4 AMIS situation report states: "At 031815C Oct 06 a GOS Antonov Aircraft was observed circling Kutum area apparently in anticipation of NRF forces. At 031830C Oct 06, two GOS Mi 24 gunships were sighted in the air. One landed at Kutum Air Strip and several GOS Toyota Land cruiser gun jeeps were sighted moving north, but stopped at the Airstrip. They departed at about 031910C Oct 06. The MGS gathered that there were alleged cases of aerial bombardment by the GOS in the general area of Malagat, the MGS will further investigate and report accordingly." UNDSS remarked October 8 that since the October 3 engagement in the vicinity of Malagat, there have been no further clashes, though both SAF and NRF are believed to have reinforced and repositioned their troops.

14. (SBU) In briefing the humanitarian community, UNDSS also mentioned that it intends to investigate reports of land mines (NFI) north of Kutum. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) - in conjunction with UNDSS - is likely to carry out its assessment on October 10.

15. (SBU) Comment: The NRF's re-capture of Um Sidir from SAF in mid-September and its reported success against GNU forces north of Furawiya on October 7 indicate that the NRF remains a viable, if not widespread, fighting force. It is possible that the most recent NRF attack was prompted by the rebels' objective to secure a clear supply line from Chad, disrupting SAF's attempts to interdict

cross-border activity. Some contacts have also speculated that, in anticipation of renewed attempts to facilitate dialogue between the GNU and Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories, the NRF is seeking to seize as much territory as possible to use for political and military leverage. Since late August, the SAF has been augmenting its forces in North Darfur; though it is still too early to tell, the most recent NRF attack may be the trigger that unleashes a broader SAF offensive against rebels in North Darfur.
End Comment.

POWERS